

NEBRASKA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION



Interpretation Number: 09-02

Date: 04-11

Pamphlet Number: NFPA 101, 61

Section(s): 42.7.4 (101), 2-4.1.1

Comments:

This interpretation replaces the previous version of 09-02 dated 04-10. It applies to new aboveground and underground tunnels occupied by three or fewer people for purposes of equipment access, routine maintenance or similar purposes only.

Question: What are the exiting requirements for aboveground and underground tunnels used as part of a grain handling or grain storage facility?

Response: Two separate means of egress shall be provided from tunnels where the horizontal travel distance to a means of egress exceeds 50 feet. A single means of egress is permitted if the horizontal travel distance to a means of egress does not exceed 50 feet. Travel distance from any point in a tunnel to reach the nearest exit cannot exceed 200 feet, or 400 feet if the entire structure is fire sprinkler protected. The 200/400 foot travel distance is measured from the furthest point in the tunnel to the nearest enclosed means of egress (see below), exterior door or horizontal exit.

The following are considered an acceptable means of egress when complying with Chapter 7 of the Life Safety Code.

1. A door directly to the exterior (7.2.1)
2. A stair (including spiral or fire escape stairs) (7.2.2, 7.2.8)
3. A ramp (7.2.5)
4. An exit passageway (7.2.6)
5. A fire escape ladder (7.2.9)
6. An alternating tread device (7.2.11)
7. A horizontal exit (7.2.4)

To be considered part of a means of egress, a tunnel located below grade must provide headroom of at least 6 feet 8 inches and a clear width of at least 36 inches. A tunnel located at or above grade must provide headroom of at least 60 inches and a clear width of at least 24 inches.

Dead ends within a tunnel cannot exceed 50 feet, 100 feet if the entire structure is fire sprinkler protected.

All exits, with the exception of a horizontal exit, must discharge to the exterior. The use of a hatch or similar access door is acceptable when the hatch is easily operable and does not require the use of a key or tool. No door, hatch or exit access device shall be locked when the tunnel is occupied. Additional safety features such as emergency lighting and exit signage may be required for tunnels.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John E. Falgione", is written over a horizontal line.

Date: 4-13-11

Title: John E. Falgione, State of Nebraska Fire Marshal